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Literary Selections.

THE GREEK CHURCH.

Embracing within its pale more than fifty millions of people, and being the national Church of one of the great powers in the world's affairs, the Greek Church has ordinarily no little interest. Closely connected with the origin, and greatly affecting and affected by the results of the Crimean war, it is just now exciting more than ordinary interest and attention in our own country as well as in England and the other countries more immediately affected by the conduct and results of that war. For, far distant from the field as we may be, as republicans and as protestants we will be affected by what is really the politico-religious war between Russia and Rome—the seven-hilled city of St. Peter and St. Petersburg.

The Greek Church is ordinarily considered a schism from the Latin or Roman Church. Even after the removal of the seat of government of the Roman empire from Rome to Constantinople, there were hot and ill-concealed jealousies and conflicts between the chief bishops (patriarchs) of the two cities. The patriarch of Constantinople claimed higher dignity and superior authority, in consequence of his being over the see in which were the court and imperial residence. The patriarch of Rome, on the other hand, based his claim to the supremacy upon the antiquity and wealth of his see and his successorship to St. Peter. For several centuries there were now and then quite violent disturbances between these dignitaries and their adherents. In the ninth century a wide and most notable breach occurred; but it was not until the eleventh that, in consequence of the ex-communication of the Bishop of Constantinople by Pope Leo IX., an open and entire separation took place between the Churches of the Levant and that of the West. Proposals have been repeatedly made for uniting the two communions; but the hatred of the Latins to the Greeks, and of the Greeks to the Latins, has hitherto been insuperable.

At present the Greek Church embraces nearly all of the inhabitants of Russia—in Europe, Asia and America—and some twelve or more millions of people residing in Turkey, Greece, Asia Minor, Palestine, and along the northern shore of Africa. It includes a population variously estimated at from fifty to sixty millions, and subsists in the form of several sects or divisions, separated, however, by lesser differences in doctrine and ceremonies than the various denominations of our Protestant Church. The largest, and to us most interesting division, is the Russian; and after having stated some facts with reference to the Greek Church in general, we shall add something with respect to the Russo-Greek Church in particular—simply premising that the Greek Church everywhere, in learning and piety, is hardly the shadow of what it was in former times.

The following statements will exhibit the main tenets of the Greek Church.—They do not usually baptize their children until three, six, ten, or even fifteen years of age; but it is considered almost sure damnation if they die unbaptized.—Their form of baptism is a triple immersion. They require the laity to receive the communion in both kinds; and administer it even to infants. They re-baptize those admitted from the Roman communion to their own. They deny the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Son, insisting that it is only from the Father. They exclude from the sacrament the Roman ones of confirmation and extreme unction, and have no superstitious reverence for the Host. They deny that auricular confession (private confession to a priest) is required by any divine precept. They deny that there is any such place as purgatory, though they pray for the dead. They deny that the pope has any special authority, and at set times, in their ceremonies, hand him over to the "evil one." They have no very holy horror of the dissolutions of the marriage tie. They condemn all fourth marriages. They deny that either usury or fornication are mortal sins.—They hold that such as may have taken holy orders may become laymen again, and they approve the marriage of their priests—provided that they marry before ordination.

The form of government of the Greek Church is Episcopal. The highest prelate over the largest districts is called a patriarch, and his see a patriarchate.—At first, and for some time, the patriarch

of Constantinople was the head of the entire Greek Church; but at present his authority is limited to the Greek Church proper—a very small part of the whole—there being an independent patriarch of Jerusalem, another of Antioch, and another of Alexandria; and there being now, as we shall see, no such dignity over the Russian dominions. The patriarch is elected by the highest clergy of his patriarchate, and he, as well as his electors, must be unmarried. In the Turkish dominions the election of a patriarch, before valid, must be confirmed by a grand seignior.

The clergy of the Greek Church are divided into two great classes—the one composed of the priests or pastors proper, and the other of the monks and higher clergy—bishops, archbishops, and patriarchs. A provision with respect to the first of these classes is, that they must be married before being ordained; and it is said, (though difficult of verification) that another provision—founded doubtless upon the precept of Paul to Timothy, requiring the one desiring the office of a bishop to have "his children in subjection"—requires them to be fathers! The other class may marry, but with the loss of their ecclesiastical dignity. The clergy live on the revenue of the churches, which they manage to make a very considerable sum.

Monasticism prevails to a very great extent in the Greek Church. Upon Mount Athos, in Greece, is a most celebrated and interesting collection of monasteries, numbering some twenty, with many connected and dependent habitations, and containing a population of several thousands. The buildings are large, oftenest in the form of the Greek cross, always occupy striking positions, and have very much of the military air.—They are adorned with almost numberless pictures, and have the heads and members of nearly all the saints in the calendar—including the left hand of St. Michael, "in good condition, diffusing an abundant and delightful odor," and the left foot of St. Anne, "a right marvelous and savory relic!"

The monks are divided into three progressive classes. On entering the monastery they undergo a novitiate of three years, from which they advance to the lesser habit; and in rare instances, except in the hour of death, (for it is said that one dying with this habit on him is sure of heaven) to the greater habit. The discipline of these monasteries is very severe. The monks never sleep more than five or six hours a day; never taste flesh meat; on one hundred and fifty-nine days of the three hundred and sixty-five have only one meal, and on no day more than two; and ordinarily, their diet consists of vegetables and bread, boiled in water. By far the greater part of the monks are engaged in manual labor. "Some of us pray, and the rest of us work," was the answer they gave to a recent traveler, in reply to a question as to their employment. A great number are engaged in tillage, others in various handicrafts—manufacturing articles for home consumption.

Convents are not so numerous in the Greek Church as monasteries. The nuns are in no degree inferior to the monks in their abstemious courses of life, their penances, fasts, prayers, and other acts of devotion. Their heads are shaved close; their habit is of black woolen cloth. Each one has separate apartments—usually two rooms—and those in good circumstances are allowed to keep a servant. They spend their time often in educating young ladies, and occupying their leisure moments with needle-work.

The ceremonies of the Greek Church are most like those of the Roman Catholic Church, though in some respects widely diverse. They have feasts and fasts, high-days and holy-days, set-days and Sundays, in abundance. Their fasts are much more rigorous than those of the Roman Catholics. They address prayers to the Virgin Mary, and invoke the saints; but they deny that they do so in the same way as the Roman Catholics.

The manner of the introduction of the Greek Church into Russia is differently stated. One account is that two Greek priests, having visited Moravia, met there the Duchess of Olga, and having secured her as the first convert, she was greatly instrumental in enlarging the Church.—For this reason, it is said, she (under the name of Helena) has been enrolled as a saint in the Russian calendar.

Another story is that Vladimir, whose reign terminated in 1015, feeling the necessity of some religion to the prosperity of his kingdom, sent ten of his most distinguished men into all the various coun-

tries then known, to examine and report upon their systems of religion. Being semi-barbarous, these commissioners were of course, disposed to recommend a system which had an imposing ritual, and appealed very much to the senses. They went to Mecca, but soon left; for Mohammedanism then made too great demands upon the powers of self-control, prohibited many things to which the Russians were addicted. They then visited the East, but were no better pleased with the Manichæan system, then so prevalent, for it was too much occupied with abstract ideas about matter and spirit, good and evil, &c. They disliked Romanism on account of the arrogant claims of the pope. Judaism was spurned because it had no country, and its professors were wanderers in the world. But the lofty miranets of the Church of St. Sophia, and the magnificent ceremonial of the Greek Church filled the royal commissioners with admiration, and they recommended to Vladimir that which ever since has been the national religion of Russia. For though, in the thirteenth century, Russia, after long resistance, became the prey of the Mongol hordes, and her princes were the vassals of the descendants of Genghis Khan, yet even the Mongol rule was favorable to the Church, and greatly increased its wealth and influence.

For some time the metropolitan bishops of Moscow were consecrated by the Patriarch of Constantinople. But, after the capture of that city by the Turks, they were consecrated by the assembled bishops of the Russian Church. In 1588 the Russian dominions were constituted a separate patriarchate; but in 1721 Peter the Great abolished the office of patriarch, the dignity and lustre of which approached so near the prerogatives of majesty as to be offensive to the emperor and burdensome to the people; and, according to the present constitution of the Church, the Czar is its head, as the sovereign of England is the head of the established Church in the British dominions. Operating upon his subjects through their religion, as well as their loyalty, his influence must be immense. The government of the Church is professedly vested in a "Holy Synod," composed of the higher ecclesiastics; but none of its decrees are of any force without the approval of the imperial procurator—usually a lay-member of the synod.

The Russian clergy form a distinct caste; supported not by law, but by the strictest rules of tradition. A priest marries the daughter of a priest, and the same families commonly remain in holy orders. The priests are allowed to marry but once, and this provision makes them very careful of their wives; and hence one of the most expressive sayings of the people is, "As happy as the wife of a priest!"

Priests (or "pappas," as they are called) of merit are very rare in the rural districts. Most of them are ignorant, of course, and exclusively occupied with their own affairs. In solemnizing the ceremonies, or dispensing the sacraments, they frequently think of nothing but their own gains. They care little or nothing for the cure of souls, and spread around but little of either instruction or consolation. Dr. Baird, in his "Lectures on Europe," represents them as often administering the sacraments when intoxicated and states that they frequently drown a child when baptizing it, and then, with the utmost nonchalance, turn round to the assembly, and say, "It has pleased God to take that child to himself—happily another!"

A recent French traveler produces some very thrilling statistics, taken from the reports of the holy synod, with reference to the capacity and morals of the Russian clergy. From these statistics it appears that, during the year 1836, no less than two hundred and eight ecclesiastics were deposed for infamous crimes, and nineteen hundred and eighty-five convicted of offenses of less gravity. As the whole number of clergy at that time was one hundred and two thousand four hundred and fifty-six, it appears that about two per cent were judicially condemned in one year. In 1839 this proportion was as high as five per cent; and in the period of three years, from 1836 to 1839, more than fifteen thousand ecclesiastics passed before the courts of justice.

In the early part of this century, the British and Foreign Bible Society engaged in extensive efforts for the distribution of the Bible in Russia, and, for a time, the scheme met with the approval of the Emperor and the higher clergy. But the ecclesiastics became alarmed about losing their sway over a Bible-reading people, and, at their instigation the

late emperor, soon after coming to the throne, issued a ukase suppressing all Bible societies, and prohibiting the circulation of the Scriptures in any part of his kingdom.

Peter the Great was just on the point of laying his ban upon all monasticism in the Russo-Greek Church, but, for some cause, did not do this, though he guarded it with some most wholesome restraints. Thus, no man can enter a monastery until fifty years of age. A married man cannot enter a convent without his wife agrees to enter with him, nor at all, if there are any children under age. No female can enter a convent before she is forty years of age.

The Empress Catherine II. confiscated all the landed property of the Russo-Greek Church, and assigned regular salaries to the ecclesiastics, and stipends to the monasteries and convents. The sum thus paid by the government is not large, but the deficiency is amply compensated by the influence of the clergy in extracting voluntary contributions. It is related that, on one occasion, the Emperor Alexander expressed his astonishment to one of the dignitaries of the Church at the immense sums of money the clergy had at their disposal. The prelate, without making any other reply, led the emperor to a window, and pointed to the entrance of a much-frequented place of devotion near by, where each worshipper, as he entered, could be seen dropping into a box a piece of money. Besides, the priests are most wicked extortioners. "No one," says Ricaut, "can procure absolution, be admitted to confession, have his children baptized, be married or divorced, or obtain an excommunication against his enemy, without first paying to the priests a valuable consideration. They make for themselves the best market they can, and fix a price on their spiritual commodities in proportion to the devotion and ability of their respective customers."

After what has been said with reference to the priesthood, if there is any force in the old proverb, "Like priest, like people," the condition of the laity of the Greek Church can easily be guessed at.

Having said thus much as to the past and present of the Russo-Greek Church, and having no intention to speculate on its probable future, we can only express the belief (which is probably the child of the wish) that it will gain the ascendancy over those now resisting its power, and, having driven out from the Levant Mohammedanism and Romanism, will itself eventually be superseded by a pure Protestant Christianity.

A celebrated Englishman, writing recently in one of the British Reviews, after stating as the cause of the Crimean war the emperor's (of Russia) claim to a protectorate over the twelve millions of Greek Christians in the Turkish dominions, and declaring that France could not allow his claim, because it might interfere with her protectorate over two millions of Roman Catholics who are Turkish subjects, writes as follows—by way, we suppose, of justifying the course of England in entering the (un) "Holy Alliance":—"The dangers to which the liberties of mankind are exposed by the progress of the politico-religious power of Russia are very serious indeed, and far greater than those with which civilization is threatened by the politico-religious power of Rome."—"But this is the utterance of one ready to say harsh things about everything Russian, and it will be hard, we think, to convince Americans that it is true. And it will not be hard, we think, for them to decide which is likely to stand most in the way of universal civil and religious liberty—the Russo-Greek Church, with all her present superstition and degradation, but without a pretended infallible head, without auricular confession, without a cursed and cursing system of monasticism, without a claim to be the only true Church, and the right to punish heretics, or the Roman Church, with all these, and with her Jesuitical system, her immense revenues and church establishments, and all her abominable mental slavery."

WOMEN SHOULD LEARN TO SWIM.—"Lloyd's" to the "Steamboat Directory" gives a thrilling instance of the necessity of women knowing how to swim. When the ill-fated Ben Sherrod was in flames on the Mississippi River, and the lady passengers who had thrown themselves into the water were drowning around the boat, the wife of Captain Castagne jumped into the river, with her infant in her arms, and swam ashore, a distance of half a mile, being the only woman saved out of sixteen. She had learned to swim when a girl.

NAPOLEON I. AND RUSSIA.

We are indebted to an esteemed contributor for the following translation of an extract from the closing chapter of a "History of the Campaign in Russia, in 1812," by M. Emile Marco de St. Hillaire, published in Paris in 1846. The author, well known for his thorough acquaintance with the history of the period about which he writes, surveys his theme from a high stand-point, and appears to have formed an impartial and accurate estimate of the consequences both to France and to Russia, of that campaign, which wrought an entire change in the politics of Europe, made the Muscovite Empire the first continental power, and placed the Czar, up to that time an ally of France, at the head of that league of kings and petty princes which ended in the destruction of the Empire and the dismemberment of France. How far the predictions of the writer are to be verified, is a problem which seems likely to be solved by passing events in Eastern Europe:—

"They have read history to little purpose who compare the defeat of the little Swedish army under Charles XII. at Pultowa, with our retreat from Russia. To find anything analogous to the ruin and disaster attending the formidable invasion of 1812, it is necessary to go back to remote antiquity—to the time of Xerxes, whose almost numberless fleets and armies were scattered and annihilated by the patriotic valor of the Greeks, and by the storms of the Egean Sea. The expedition to Russia affords a grand and sublime lesson both for peoples and for kings. The peoples will learn that a brave nation need never abandon itself to despair, and that it ever contains within itself the means of protecting its own honor, and of successfully resisting all attempts to reduce it to a state of vassalage. Kings, in reflecting upon it, will be driven to the conviction, that neither the number of their chariots, nor the multitude of their battalions, nor that assurance, which an uninterrupted succession of victories gives the conquerors, can shield them from those mischances, those caprices of fate, which change in a moment the condition of empires and transfer the palms and laurels of victory into the funeral pyre."

"Man proposes, but God disposes," says Bossuet, and the truth and justice of this eloquent description of the course of events in this world, have been consecrated anew by our fatal Russian campaign. Indeed, it seems as if the most magnificent, most numerous, and best appointed army which France ever set on foot, was destined to perish amidst the frozen steppes of Muscovy, in order that the Russian power, unknown in Europe before the sixteenth century, should take its place, at one step, in the front rank among the nations of the world. Nay, more, the inheritance of Peter the Great has already exceeded the limits of political grandeur which its illustrious founder had assigned to it.

"Two great powers, this day, divide between them the empire of the world. England is the queen and tyrant of the seas; Russia is the sovereign of the European and Asiatic continent. With one hand she reaches the ramparts of Constantinople; with the other, she leans upon the provinces of the Celestial Empire. Both Turkey and China will one day become her prey; and, far richer and of wider extent than the old Roman Empire, Russia will spread over the two hemispheres; from the Caucasus to the Rhine, from the Black Sea to Kamtschatka, from Finland to India, she will plant her standards, and end by demolishing, piece-meal, the colossal mercantile power of haughty and arrogant England."

The expedition to Russia accelerated, by three centuries, the future destinies of Muscovy. The frightful and lingering agonies of that calamitous battle of three months' duration, dissipated forever the prestige which surrounded our colors, and revealed to the Russians the vast extent of their own power and resources.—Napoleon did for them more than Peter the Great; by that series of great battles which decided the destinies of the world, he civilized, so to speak, those wild hordes, which had been collected from the remotest parts of the Ukraine and from Tartary, from the banks of the Volga and the Borysthene, trembling with fear to meet us in mortal combat. These same barbarians saw us fly before them; and not us alone, for the troops of all Europe: for Swiss, Spaniards, Portuguese, Italians, Bavarians, Austrians, Prussians, &c., all contributed to swell the ranks of that grand army of almost fabulous numbers. They soon came to look without blanching upon that eagle,

whose now harmless glances inspired nothing but pity—that eagle which at Austerlitz, at Eylau, and at Moskwa had thundered over their heads, but which now had scarce strength enough to escape from the arrows of the descendants of Geliuin and of Attila.

We repeat it, Russia owes to Napoleon the knowledge of the secret of her colossal strength, the development of her glory and of her influence; and if, at some future time a philosopher-king should mount the throne of the Czar, he will not hesitate to erect, on the banks of the Neva, a funeral monument to the memory of that great captain, who lost, amidst the flames of Moscow and the ice of the Beresina, the iron crown of Charlemagne and the golden crown of Hugh Capet, the keys of Rome and of Paris, and perhaps also the liberties of Europe. But let us bow before the impenetrable decrees of Providence, and repeat with Bossuet—"Man proposes, but God disposes."

DANIEL WEBSTER.

The following portraiture of Daniel Webster, is by Ralph Waldo Emerson:—"Mr. Webster had a natural ascendancy of aspect and carriage which distinguished him above his contemporaries. His countenance, his figure, his manners, were all in so grand a style, that he was, without effort, as superior to his most eminent rivals, as they were to the humblest; so that his arrival in any place in this country drew crowds of people to satisfy their eyes, who could not see him enough. He did not disappoint the eye nor the ear. He was a fit figure in the landscape. I remember his appearance at Bunker Hill. He knew well that a little more or less of rhetoric signified nothing. He was only to say grand things when he had them; if not, then to abstain from saying unfit things. It was a place for behavior more than speech, and Webster walked through his part with entire success. The perfection of his elocution and all that thereto belongs—accent, attitude, manner—we shall not soon find again. Then he was so thoroughly simple and wise in his rhetoric. He saw through his matter, hugged his facts close; though he knew how to make such exordiums and perorations as would not embarrass his march or confound his transitions. We saw them in order as they were. Though he knew very well on occasions, how to present his personal claims, yet in his argument he was intellectual, and kept his fact bare of personality; so that his splendid wrath, when his eyes became lamps, was the wrath of the cause he stood for. His power was not in excellent parts, but was totally different. He had a great and everywhere equal property. He worked with that closeness of adhesion to the matter in hand which a joiner uses, and had the same quiet fitness of place that an oak or a mountain might have. After all, there remained that perfect propriety, so that his beauties of detail were endless. He seemed born for the bar, for the Senate. He took naturally a very large part in public and private affairs; for his head distributed things in their places, and what he saw so well he compelled other people to see also. Ah, great is the privilege of eloquence. What gratitude does every human being feel to him who speaks well for the right, who translates truth into language entirely plain and clear."

VITIATED AIR.—In about two minutes and a half all the blood contained in the human system, amounting in the adult to nearly three gallons, traverses the respiratory surface. Every one, then, who breathes an impure atmosphere two minutes and a half, has every particle of his blood acted on by the vitiating air. Every particle has become less vital, less capable of repairing structures, or of carrying on functions; and the longer such air is respired, the more impure it becomes, and the more corrupt grows the blood. After breathing two minutes and a half an atmosphere incapable of properly oxygenating the fluids which are traversing the lungs, every drop of blood in the human being is more or less poisoned; and in two minutes and a half more the entire minutest part of all man's fine wrought organs has been visited, and acted upon by this poisoned fluid—the tender, delicate, the weak and the sensitive nerves, the heart, the brain, together with the skin, the muscles, the bones throughout the structure—in short—the entire being. There is not a point in it but must have suffered injury.

Evil thoughts, like unwelcome guests, make no part of a family, and will depart if not encouraged to stay.

WHALES.

The usual rate at which whales swim, even when they are on their passage from one situation to another, seldom exceeds four miles an hour; and though when urged by the sight of an enemy, or alarmed by the stroke of a harpoon, their extreme velocity may be at the rate of eight or nine miles an hour; yet we find this speed never continues longer than a few minutes, before it relaxes to almost one-half. Hence for the space of a few minutes, they are capable of darting through the water, with the velocity of the fastest ship under sail, and of ascending with such rapidity as to lean entirely out of the water. This feat they sometimes perform as an amusement apparently, to the high admiration of the distant spectator; but to the no small terror of the inexperienced fisher, who even under such circumstances, are often ordered, by the fool-hardy harpooner, to "pull away" to the attack. Sometimes the whales throw themselves into a perpendicular posture, with their heads downward, and rearing their tails on high in the air, beat the water with awful violence. In both these cases, the sea is thrown into foam, and the air filled with vapors; the noise in calm weather is heard to a great distance; and the concentric waves produced by the concussion of the water, are communicated abroad to a considerable extent. Sometimes the whale shakes its tremendous tail in the air, which cracking like a whip, resounds to the distance of two or three miles.

PICTURE OF MORMONISM.

A correspondent of the *Tribune* gives an account of an interview with a gentleman just returned from Utah. He says:

"My friend gives a horrible account of the moral and social condition of the Mormons, with whom he spent some months. He left them wallowing deeper and deeper in the slough of filthy sensuality, with a certainty of going from bad to worse until their whole fabric of imposture is exploded by the miseries it creates and diffuses. He says that the women are nearly all anxious to fly from the horrible den; especially those who have been 'sealed' as the 'spiritual wives' of the scoundrelly hypocrites who propagate and uphold the monstrous delusion. Nearly all the leaders have from three women each up to Brigham Young's seventy, some of whom make a poor living by washing the clothes of the U. S. soldiers. Hundreds of these deceived, abused women secretly attempt to beg the privilege of coming away with the troops and trains passing from time to time through or coming from Salt Lake City, but this cannot be allowed. Nearly all would go away if they could.—Such pictures of distress and despair as presented by many of these deceived and abused women can be found no where else but in Utah. Hundreds of them never heard or dreamed of the 'spiritual wife' system until it burst upon their amazed vision on their arrival at Salt Lake. And such a mixture of profanity and blasphemy, nonsense, impudent assumption and buffoonery, as is contained in their sermons and other religious exercises cannot be paralleled in the world. A 'Gentile' of any account is carefully watched from the hour he ventures among them, and there is little scruple as to the means whereby a troublesome intruder is disposed of."

Homer was a beggar; Plautus turned a mill; Terence was a slave; Bathias died in jail; Paul Borgheese had fourteen trades, yet starved with them all; Russ was often distressed for a few shillings; Cervantes died of hunger; Camoens, the writer of the "Lusiad," ended his days in an almshouse; and Vaugelas left his body to the surgeons to help pay his debts. In England, Bacon lived a life of meanness and distress; Sir Walter Raleigh died on the scaffold; Spenser died in want; Milton sold his copyright of "Paradise Lost" for £10, and died in obscurity; Dryden lived in poverty and distress; Otway perished of hunger; Leo died in the streets; Steele was in perpetual warfare with the bailiffs; Goldsmith's "Vicar of Wakefield" was sold for a trifle, to save him from the grasp of the law; Richard Savage died in prison, at Bristol, for a debt of eight pounds; Butler lived in penury, and died poor; Chatterton, the child of genius and misfortune, destroyed himself.

An English writer classifies old maids and bachelors as "solitary mature men and women who have nothing hoping to them."

The eleventh commandment is this: "thou shalt not be found out."